



# Idaho Naturalist news

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The Idaho Naturalist News is a quarterly newsletter of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program.

Edited by Linda Kahn and Sara Focht

For questions and comments contact Sara Focht at [Sara.Focht@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:Sara.Focht@idfg.idaho.gov).

Send newsletter contributions to Linda Kahn at [hmc214@yahoo.com](mailto:hmc214@yahoo.com).

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## Ken and Collett Olson Receive IDFG Upper Snake Region Volunteers of the Year



The Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG) is proud to announce Ken and Collett Olson as the Volunteers of the Year for 2012 in the Upper Snake Region. As a couple, these amazing wildlife volunteers have donated over 940 hours of service to the Department in the 2012 year alone. "I can't believe how generous these two individuals are," says James Brower, Volunteer Service Coordinator for the region. "It has been my pleasure getting to know Ken and Collett on a personal and professional level. It is a rare and unusual thing to meet such dedicated individuals as Ken and Collett. I know I can always count on them in a pinch. They are truly lovers of Idaho's wildlife and they definitely put forth the effort to prove it."

Ken and Collett retired and moved to Idaho Falls from Austin, Texas, in 2008 and 2009, respectively. Immediately after arriving in Eastern Idaho, Ken and Collett began volunteering in the community. In 2010, the Olsons joined the Idaho Master Naturalist Program sponsored by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Since joining the Idaho Fish & Game volunteer program Ken and Collett have participated in several scientific surveys and are heavily involved in the Bear Aware program. The next time you are approached to take a fishing survey or are attending an event where the bear trailer is present, you may just run into Ken and Collett Olson. If you do, please take some time to thank them both for their many hours of service to protect Idaho's wildlife resources. Aside from the Idaho Department of Fish & Game, you may also catch the Olsons volunteering at the Colonial Theater, Tautphaus Park Zoo, and the Museum of Idaho.

The Idaho Department of Fish & Game in the Upper Snake region would like to thank all of their many volunteers for their service and dedication to Idaho's wildlife. We especially wish to recognize the following individuals for donating well over 100 hours each of volunteer service for the Department: Earl Jensen, Jeane Jensen, Melissa McLauren, Ray Pollock, Lew Reynolds, Master Naturalists John Braastad, Dale Claflin, Dave Godfrey, Mike Melville, Errol Mobley, Joyce Pole, Sam Pole, Bill Steinke, Clella Steinke, Jean Taylor, Donna Whitham, and Mark Whitham.

# Lightning Creek Restoration

*Treasured Landscapes, Unforgettable Experiences*

*Don Childress, Idaho Master Naturalist, Pend Oreille Chapter*

On February 27, the National Forest Foundation (NFF) ([www.nationalforests.org](http://www.nationalforests.org)) held an information sharing and idea gathering session in Sandpoint at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Pizza, delicious lunch included, concerning the “Treasured Landscape” designation for Lightning Creek, in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest.

The Idaho Panhandle National Forest is one of 14 forests in the nation to be selected, and the only one in Idaho. Lightning Creek was chosen because of the value placed on recreation in the area, the large degree of local participation, and because NFF could join the project already begun by the Forest Service.



*Tucked into the Cabinet Mountains of the Northern Rockies, Idaho's Lightning Creek easily lives up to its namesake. Photo courtesy U.S.F.S.*

Due to its wet climate (more than 90 inches of rain a year), steep slopes, and high-octane logging during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lightning Creek is highly susceptible to landslides, avalanches, and high-energy runoff events. This “scouring action” of large-scale flooding, moves huge amounts of sediment and debris downstream causing extensive damage to road and trail systems and to the stream bed. The most recent scour was in November 1996 when the stream flow increased from 12 cubic feet per second to a record 18,700 cubic feet per second in the course of a few days. The result was a loss of streamside vegetation and naturally-occurring woody debris

from the stream channel. An interruption of this scouring cycle through restoration of woody debris and planting stream bank and gravel bar vegetation will help the creek to withstand future high water events.

The restoration effort will begin at the top of the drainage and will include prescribed burns to regenerate white bark pine, an important food for grizzly bears, and Clark's nutcracker. Increased white bark pine populations will support snow retention and reduce the likelihood of fast snow melt runoff and associated flood events downstream. Some roadbeds and trails will be decommissioned and re-routed to reduce erosion. Willows and cottonwoods will be planted on denuded gravel bars along with native plants on stream banks. A plant survey will be organized prior to restoration to assess native plants and the presence of noxious weeds. Woody debris will be anchored in the lower stream to further the mitigation of flood events and to support fish habitat.

Actual restoration is slated to start in 2014, with the project to be completed in 2017. The National Forest Foundation will host another information meeting and progress report in the Fall of 2013.



# Master Naturalist Leads Cottonwood Restoration

*Steven Berg, Idaho Master Naturalist, Sagebrush-steppe Chapter*

In late May, members of the Sagebrush-steppe Master Naturalist Chapter carried out a project for The Land Trust of the Treasure Valley, whose mission is “to conserve nature close to home by protecting southwestern Idaho’s open spaces.” Under the supervision and guidance of Ann DeBolt, renowned botanist specializing in native plant and water-wise gardens at Idaho Botanical Gardens, about 180 native Black Cottonwood plugs (taken right from the Lucky Peak Nursery freezer) were moved to larger planters in order to reach “survival-success” size within the next year. The coordinator was one of our class of 2013 members, Jill Baum (whose name fittingly means “tree” in German), who arranged the entire project. Having established impressive credentials (Operations Director of Student Conservation Association who once supervised 4,000 students in the field; earner of master’s degree in land resources; “camping geologist”), Jill has taken on many local environmental and ecological projects. Her energy is boundless and she has stepped up to the plate big time.



*Above: Jill Baum with her black cottonwood trees. Right: Idaho Master Naturalists Bret Lane, Micki Kieser, and Linda Moore pot cottonwoods for further growth before transplant. Photo by Steven Berg.*



# Pend Oreille Chapter at Earth Day Celebration

*Gail Bolen, Idaho Master Naturalist, Pend Oreille Chapter*



*Pictured from left are Lori Getts, Valle Novak, Clem Yonker (President), and Don Childress. Photo by Gail Bolen.*

The Pend Oreille Chapter of the Master Naturalists participated with other environmentally focused groups to observe Earth Day on April 20 at the Forrest Bird Charter School in Sandpoint. The MN booth featured Bluebird and Kestrel nest boxes for sale as part of ongoing group projects. The chapter is currently conducting classes for potential new members.

## Henry's Fork Chapter Naturalist Receives Volunteer Award

*Anne Marie Emery, Conservation Education Biologist, Henry's Fork Foundation*

Idaho Master Naturalist Val Zupsan, from the Henry's Fork Chapter in Island Park, and her husband Steve Whistler were recognized as "Volunteers of the Year" by the Henry's Fork Foundation at the organization's annual celebratory event held in June. Val has remained an active IMN since 2008, and is currently serving as the Chapter's board president in addition to her active volunteerism efforts. Val and her husband Steve have assisted in numerous HFF projects including: bi-annual roadside cleanups, monitoring of fish traps on the Buffalo River, assisting in back country Yellowstone Cutthroat trout assessments, helping with fly-casting competitions, and HFF fundraising efforts. Val and Steve motivate and encourage volunteerism in the Island Park community with their upbeat attitudes and dedication to conservation of the Henry's Fork watershed. Congratulations to them and the Henry's Fork Chapter for their continued recognition!



*Steve Whistler (left) and Idaho Master Naturalist Val Zupsan (middle) accept the Volunteer of the Year award from Henry's Fork Foundation's Executive Director, Brandon Hoffner (right).*



# Interview with Sagebrush-steppe Master Naturalist Sue Birnbaum



## ***Was the outdoors part of your everyday experience while growing up?***

My four siblings and I grew up in Omaha during the 60s and 70s. If we weren't riding bikes or playing tennis, we were climbing trees and hanging out at playgrounds. My grandparents owned a golf course near a creek. To get us out of her hair for a few hours during summer mornings, my mom would take us to the golf course, let us pick out a candy bar at the concession, and turn us loose to explore the creek. We would create forts out of discarded cardboard and pieces of wood. I felt comfortable under the sky among rocks, water, and trees. Maybe this experience was the root of my huge desire for hiking that has lasted twenty-seven years and counting.

I loved nature and was curious about it as a kid. During summer vacations I would pick a nature subject and "study" it. One summer I made a notebook of drawings of birds of the Midwest; another summer I collected leaves and made another notebook with tree drawings and descriptions. On

freezing winter nights I would take my World Book Encyclopedia with the page open to stars and constellations and stand in the backyard, on the glowing white snow, and stare up into the ink black skies to see if I could identify the same star patterns.

While going through the trials of being a teenager, if I got on my bike and rode a few miles away to Memorial Park in Omaha, the smell and feel of the grass under the tall trees there would give me solace.

I think back then, kids may have entertained themselves more outside. During the winter in Omaha, it was difficult to be in nature, but my siblings and I went sledding a lot. I always had a houseplant or two in my bedroom – I have seldom been without a houseplant, and now I have thirty-five orchids and six houseplants!

## ***So your "growing up" years were centered in Nebraska. Sounds like a lot of creative freedom in the outdoors! Did you have familiarity with other parts of the United States?***

In August, for family reunions, we would go to our relative's farm in Iowa. The best part of this was when my cousin would take each one of us for a ride on his Indian motorcycle along the trails and dirt roads near the farm. It was hot but I loved the dirt and the shade of the trees.

After I graduated from high school, I visited my best friend Ann who was attending University of Colorado in Boulder. I had never seen mountains before. This visit changed my life because after we saw Rocky Mountain National Park, it was then that I knew I would always try to live near or in mountains. Going back home to Omaha after that visit on the Greyhound bus, I just cried!

My friend Ann influenced my appreciation for nature greatly. When visiting her in Colorado, we once went up to a high mountain meadow and while sitting on a log in the snow, she read spiritual nature passages to me. We would practice our awareness of nature sounds by closing our eyes and listening to sounds within three feet of us, then again focusing on sounds in an intermediate distance, and then finally distant sounds.

***How did these experiences influence your adult life?***

I now want to have a career where I can dedicate my efforts to the environment and wilderness, and teach and help adults and kids to appreciate natural processes. I would like to help gather data to bring more information and insight into species that need to be protected.

My closest friends are fellow hikers with the same appreciation of the desert. We recently had a twenty-year reunion of the start of our friendships formed while hiking in the Coachella Valley in California.

***How has living in Idaho influenced you?***

I have had many great outdoor experiences in Idaho and feel lucky to live here because of the beautiful wilderness in our own backyard. I have learned to appreciate the ruggedness of the mountains from hiking and summiting some of them. I have learned to love the stunning beauty of a winter scene while snowshoeing in Ponderosa State Park or up to Sunset Lookout, north of Idaho City.

I have learned more about land use issues such as farming and livestock grazing, ORV use, and what modes of transportation are allowed on trails in Idaho. I prefer to hike and snowshoe in quiet wilderness, but I also respect the choice of others who prefer mechanized use of trails, such as snow machines and ORV's.



I have just completed my Bachelor of Science in Geosciences from Boise State. The geology classes in this program have greatly elevated my appreciation of Idaho because I know more about the geologic processes that have shaped this state. There is such a large variety of geology to look at including metamorphic rock, shear zones, bimodal volcanism, and sedimentary units, evidence of flood plains, etc. – a geologist's paradise!

As a Master Naturalist, I have helped botanists who work with the Idaho Natural Heritage Program with rare plant surveying, which has helped me appreciate Idaho's native plants and the challenging conditions that they face. I helped a botanist survey Slickspot Peppergrass in the area between Boise and Mountain Home a few years ago. It was interesting to see how small the Peppergrass plots were compared to the large amount of surrounding invasive plants. Last year I worked with other Master Naturalists and two botanists on a study of the rare Packard's Milkvetch that grows only near Emmett.

The Idaho Master Naturalist program has allowed me to meet many inspirational people that know so much about Idaho's plants, fishes, birds, geology and more. It is wonderful to see the enthusiasm and ingenuity of some fellow Master Naturalists, and how they are passionate about teaching kids as well as adults about natural processes. I want to dedicate more of my time in helping others to appreciate wilderness and nature, and this program gives me a great many opportunities to do so.

*Thank you Sue!*





*A male wood duck (right) and a great blue heron (left) perched in trees at Barber Park in Boise. Photos by Sagebrush-steppe Master Naturalist Bob Ellis.*

## Becoming an Idaho Master Naturalist

*Krista Young, Idaho Master Naturalist, BYU Idaho Subchapter*

I am a senior studying at Brigham Young University-Idaho and as part of one of my classes I am working on becoming an Idaho Master Naturalist. I grew up on the East Coast and know very little about Idaho plants, wildlife, and geography. In the past when I would go on a hike I would look at a plant and not know anything about it other than if it was a flower, it looked nice, or that it might be some kind of sage brush. My knowledge about birds, I am sad to admit, was almost non-existent.

However, since starting the Idaho Master Naturalist program I have learned so much. I know what an Indian paint brush flower looks like, what a mountain juniper is and how to identify it. I have learned what rabbit brush is and why it is so important to the wildlife in Idaho. My knowledge about the birds in Idaho has also increased. I finally know what that black and white bird is that I have been seeing for the past year that I have lived in Idaho: a magpie. I have learned about how super volcanoes shaped the landscape millions of years ago. I was taught how winds carried the sands across Idaho and formed the sand dunes.

All these things may seem small or obvious to people who have lived in Idaho their whole lives, but to me, an “outsider” to Idaho, each discovery is exciting information that helps me want to learn even more about this place that is so different than what I grew up with.



So far, one of the most exciting moments for me on this journey of learning was the hike I went on several weeks ago with a small group of friends who are also from different areas. As we hiked the North Menan Butte we looked at the plants and they started asking each other what the plants were called. I was able to tell them some of the things I have been learning. It was a small moment, nothing that changed lives and it wasn't a lot of information that I shared, but the exciting thing for me was that I did have *some* information that I could share. There is still much that I do not know. However, what I learned has gotten me excited to learn more and then share with others. I hope to continue to be involved with the Master Naturalist program wherever I end up working after graduation and gain an even greater appreciation for the diversity offered in nature.

# Wood River Valley Chapter Offers Fall Class

*Allison Marks, Environmental Resource Center, Ketchum, Idaho*

The Idaho Master Naturalist Program in the Wood River Valley (Ketchum area) is sponsored by the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Wood River Land Trust, and the Environmental Resource Center. A new course will begin on September 10th and will meet each Tuesday evening until the week before Thanksgiving. There will be three weekend field days. A Open House will be held for those interested in gaining more information Tuesday, July 30, at the Wood River Land Trust located at 119 E. Bullion Street, Hailey, ID. If questions please contact: Allison Marks, Program Director, ERC (208) 726-4333 or [allison@ercsv.org](mailto:allison@ercsv.org)



*Wood River Valley Master Naturalists Tisa Combs, Star Weekes, and Mike Treshow identify macroinvertebrates in their 2009 training session.*

# Henry's Fork Chapter Recycles Fishing Line

*Mary VanFleet, Idaho Master Naturalist, Henry's Fork Chapter*

Monofilament recycling bins are receptacles for unwanted fishing line. Designed by BoatUS, they are typically constructed of PVC and are located at popular fishing areas. The recycling bin makes proper disposal of monofilament more accessible. Users deposit tangled, unwanted monofilament (i.e. fishing line) in the bin. From there it will be collected by Master Naturalists and shipped to Berkley for recycling. Because it is strong, thin, durable and nearly invisible, monofilament is widely used by anglers. But those same qualities can make it extremely hazardous to wildlife when left behind.

Discarded monofilament, whether left intentionally or unintentionally, often accumulates in popular fishing areas and may tangle around boat propellers, leading to expensive repairs, or could entangle and kill fish, birds and mammals.



*From left to right: Mary VanFleet (kneeling), Kathleen Steven, Nancy Olson, Cathy Dufault, Jeff Dufault.*

Monofilament can take over 500 years to decompose, but the recycling bins can be the solution to this problem. Berkley has recycled over 17 million miles of fishing line so far. The recycled monofilament line is used to make park benches and fish habitat structures. The Idaho Master Naturalists will mount and maintain a monofilament recycling bin and information sign at popular fishing areas around Henry's Lake. A special thanks to Nancy Olson and Sue McKenna for writing the grant for this project.



# Henry's Fork Master Naturalists

*Penny Freppon, Idaho Master Naturalist, Henry's Fork Chapter*

The Henry's Fork Chapter of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program is continuing strongly. Thanks to our loyal and hardworking IMNs and administrative board, we have some IMN projects to share with you.

As many of you may know, we are most fortunate to have Harriman State Park of Idaho in the Island Park area. In addition to offering citizens and other visitors outstanding opportunities for recreation, including the premier Henry's Fork fishing on the Snake River, Harriman provides IMN meeting places for continuing education classes, volunteer projects, and a site for a native plant garden initiated by Bren Dismuke, (Idaho Master Naturalist-Henry's Fork Chapter) and Master Gardener. It is being maintained and expanded by Bren and other IMN volunteers.



*Photo by Bren Dismuke.*

Some historical and geographic information on this amazing park is in order; it helps frame the labor intensive "Jack Fence" (or buck and rail) project now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year at the Park.

Harriman was privately owned and operated as a cattle ranch by Union Pacific and other investors from 1907-1977. It was given as a gift to the State of Idaho by Roland and Averell Harriman. Since that time it has belonged to the people of Idaho and is still privately grazed with livestock. Its acreage is 11,000 at an elevation of over 6,000 feet, and is open year-round. [www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/parks/harriman](http://www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/parks/harriman).

In an effort to maintain and replace broken Jack Fence on the ranch, a fencing reconstruction project was begun by a former Assistant Manager at Harriman State Park. James (Jim) Kemp, a retired doctor and member of the local Chapter, took over in 2009. As a volunteer at Harriman since 2007, it was clear he would be ideal for the job. Jim was voted the Volunteer of the Year in 2011 by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. He is assisted in several ways in the fence project by the park staff that help get the materials to the building site and, importantly, by the Island Park wildlife experts who advise on how to build the fence in such ways that the wildlife corridors are fully accessible for seasonal migrations.

It is estimated that approximately 1.5 miles of new fencing has been built with a great deal more to go! This project also offers opportunities for people to donate to the park by having the name of a loved one, or other person or place they want to honor, branded into the new "Jack Fence" rail. For more information on this, contact the Friends of Harriman at [www.FriendsofHarriman.org](http://www.FriendsofHarriman.org).

In no small part, some community members and other IMNs are key to the project's success. Steve Whisler and Lee and Phyllis King, HF IMNs, have worked for years in the heavy lifting of side rails. Steve Whisler and his wife Val Zupsan are the 2013 Henry's Fork Foundation's Volunteers of the Year (see page 4), and Lee and Phyllis King have been recipients in the past. In fewer than five full years of our Chapter's existence, we have had four IMNs receive the Henry's Fork Foundation's Volunteer of the Year recognition.

Harriman State Park of Idaho is one of the most resplendent places for our chapter IMN's work and as we all agree there aren't many, if any, activities more deeply satisfying than volunteering. In addition to the Jack Fence project at Harriman State Park, we have several other activities happening to assist various local organizations and agencies.



*Above: Jim Kemp, leader of the Jack Fence project at Harriman State Park. Photo. Right: The whole fence crew. Photo by Val Zupsan.*



#### Ongoing projects include:

- \*Volunteering at the USFS Big Spring's Boat Ramp. IMNs collect data on recreation activities .
- \*Conducting Fish and Game migratory bird studies at Island Park reservoir and at Henry's Lake.
- \*Assisting with seed harvest in late summer and early fall for the USFS and Henry's Fork Foundation.
- \*Volunteering at a newly opened office in Last Chance for the Henry's Fork Foundation.
- \*Volunteering at the Nature Conservancy's Flat Ranch Visitor's Center as needed.
- \*Volunteering at the Johnny Sack Cabin on the Big Spring Loop for Fremont County Parks and Recreation.
- \*Assisting with the "Youth on the Fly" project which teaches local children and teens how to fly fish.
- \*Reporting sightings of noxious weeds in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem for the Hold the Line Project.
- \*Conducting Trumpeter Swan surveys for the Trumpeter Swan Society.
- \*Building and maintaining monofilament recycling bins.
- \*Holding a Roadside Clean-Up along the highway along the side of Henry's Lake.
- \*Assisting the USFS with Grizzly Bear surveys. Data gathering of clear-cut areas hopes to yield if there is an impact to wildlife, specifically grizzly bears, by clear cutting. Bear signs in these areas include day bedding, signs of feeding, tracking by radio collar, etc.
- \*Assisting the Sheraton Fence building project (pending approval).



# Willow Creek Adventures

*Steven Berg, Idaho Master Naturalist, Sagebrush-steppe Chapter*

On Saturday, April 20, two IDFG professionals (Michael Young and Mary Dudley), along with 15 volunteers, drove to Long Valley east of Cascade Reservoir for the purpose of riparian restoration planting. The target was Willow Creek just south of Donnelly (pop. 160), adjacent to State Highway 55. The plantings were done on private land, under agreement with IDFG to provide the trees/shrubs, labor and expertise, in exchange for temporary limited access to the land, and the ranchers' promise to fence the creek and keep livestock away. This latter agreement was critical, as much of the current ongoing damage has been caused by livestock access and grazing. Allowing the new willow, cottonwood, and dogwood plants to grow unencumbered by the threat of livestock damage and protected by fencing insures a much higher survival rate. During a five-hour session, 132 trees and shrubs were planted at critical locations near the creek, particularly in areas highly susceptible to springtime flood-level water erosion. The plants all came in five-gallon containers, with a much higher viability rate than smaller-sized potted plants.



*Left to right: Idaho Department of Fish and Game Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Dudley directs volunteers to their work. Volunteers Melinda Jackson-Perring and Master Naturalist Steven Berg pose with shovels. Volunteers assess the barren riparian area before work begins.*

# Poetry Page

## Simply Scandalous

*L. H. Kahn, Idaho Master Naturalist, Sagebrush-steppe Chapter*

It started with those two-toned tulips at the corner of Schicks Ridge and Shafer Road  
taunting me with their blinding-bright yellow and red-dipped edges.  
There I was trapped by tulips—groveling for my attention everywhere I turned  
as if I toddled around outside trolling for tulips all the live long day.

Last Tuesday? Ha! Strolling down Cartwright Road, walking stick in hand,  
what do I encounter but a near-infestation of lavender-colored lilacs  
their frilly heads sashaying right along the top of that hay farmer Bancroft's weathered fence  
tempting me to bend over, no mind to my aching back, and sweep up that sinful scent.

Talk about indecency—what about those empyreal lemon-yellow forsythias  
(*forsythia x intermedia* to those know-it-alls)  
their lacy blossom-speckled branches leaping towards the sun  
everywhere I swiveled my head to avoid them along Maple Grove.

And never even in my own spring dreams have I been ambushed  
by such a batch of irascible irises itching for my attention—amethyst, amber, azure. And ginger.  
Thought I'd fallen into the holy grail of sunsets.  
Strewn along Dry Creek Road, strutting like fancy peacocks fanning out their peacocky tails.  
(What do these irises think—that they're *courting* me?)

And spied at the end of Upper Ridge an entire colony of lilies of the valley ringing that huge maple tree  
two feet deep, bold as bandits, shiny green leaves sheltering tiny cascading rows of Lilliputian lily-white buds  
looking the picture of innocence.  
Eve's Tears my mum called them. Seductive. Deadly is more like it. Deadly poisonous.

And just yesterday morning while hiking in the foothills? Ambushed. Ravished. *Blindsided*.  
Like a meadow at Yosemite in the approach of summer an entire field aflutter with white and purple lupines  
as if the Gods had nothing better to do than sprinkle seeds all over tarnation.  
Haven't they more tawdry tasks to tend to than making the world ridiculously beautiful?  
(Don't tell a soul but I lay down in that lush field and pretended to be a lupine.)

Simply scandalous these blooming things, causing all this hullabaloo and hubbub.  
Do they think I wait around all winter for them to flagrantly show off their dazzling selves  
as if I have little better to do than waste away hours staring mouth agape, drooling like a two-month old?  
Oh, my, mustn't dally a second longer . . . my neighbor's peonies are about to bloom.

